United Nations A/HRC/37/NGO/133

General Assembly

Distr.: General
13 February 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh session
26 February-23 March 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Iraqi Development Organization, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.18-02233(E)
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Saudi-led Coalition inhibits Yemenis' right to self-determination

IDO, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, and Arabian Rights Watch Association, express dismay over ongoing systematic rights violations in Yemen. These violations stem from the impeding of the Yemeni people's right to self-determination by the Saudi-led coalition's (the Coalition) use of unlawful unilateral coercive measures,1 specifically, a war launched without a United Nations (U.N.) mandate that involves the imposition of a comprehensive and indiscriminate land, air, and sea blockade as well as daily airstrikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure under the cover of U.N. Security Council (U.N.S.C.) Resolutions 2140 and 2216, which do not actually empower the coalition to take military action.

Based on the Vienna Declaration all people have the right to self-determination so that they can administer their own affairs and determine their own political, economic, social and cultural system without external interference or control whether by the intervention of another state's military forces or through the use of mercenaries under its control or influence. Exercising this right, the Yemeni people, were making progress towards completing negotiations regarding a political solution that would govern their affairs in the post-Saleh transition period. During the deliberations and negotiations, the Coalition announced that it would begin conducting military operations in Yemen. According to the former U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen, Jamal Benomar, "when this campaign started, one thing that was significant but went unnoticed is that the Yemenis were close to a deal that would institute power-sharing with all sides, including the Houthis."2

The Coalition justifies its military intervention in Yemen as a measure to restore Transitional President Abdrabbu Mansour Hadi" (Hadi) to power after he was driven out by the Yemeni Army and Popular Committees led by the Ansar Allah3 - GPC alliance. For this, the Coalition relies on an official request submitted to the U.N.S.C. on 24 March 2015 by Khaled Alyemany, the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the U.N. Alyemany transmitted a letter from Hadi informing the President of the Security Council that "he has requested from the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the League of Arab States to immediately provide support, by all necessary means and measures, including military intervention, to protect Yemen and its people from the continuing aggression by the Houthis."4 The Coalition also points to the adoption of U.N.S.C. Resolution 2216 to lend further support to the claim that the airstrikes and blockade imposed by the Coalition on Yemen is legitimate. However, despite these claims, the Coalition's military actions have led to widespread human rights abuses and a humanitarian crisis and famine that have helped destroy government and civic institutions and infrastructure sharply degrade and grossly violate Yemenis' right to self-determination. To the contrary, it has made it more difficult for Yemenis' to safely exercise their right to self-determination.

Restoring the Government of Transitional President Hadi and Ensuing Rights Violations, Abuses and Crimes

In its attempt to restore Hadi to his office from de facto exile after his mandate expired, during the first 1,000 days of the military operations, the Coalition has violated Yemenis' right to self-determination while committing widespread human rights abuses including:

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1 Lift blockade of Yemen to stop "catastrophe" of millions facing starvation, says UN expert, OHCHR, 12 April 2017, http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21496&LangID=E

2 United Nations Press Conference, Jamal Benomar, 27 April 2015, http://webtv.un.org/watch/jamal-benomar-special-adviser-to-the-secretary-general-on-yemen-security-council-media-stakeout-27-april-2015/4199486038001

3 Ansar Allah is the official name and is otherwise commonly referred to as "Houthis."

4 Official Text of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2216(2015)&referer=/english/&Lang=E

1. **Right to Life**: While airstrikes resulted in over 50,000 civilians killed and wounded, the Coalition's blockade has caused millions to suffer. According to Yemen's Ministry of Public Health and Population, over 10,000 civilians have died because they could not get medical treatment abroad due to the Coalition's ban on flights to and from Sanaa International Airport.5 Children, pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions are among those most vulnerable because they face the "triple threat" of conflict, famine and cholera.

2. **Rights of Child**: Over 5,000 children casualties have occurred due to the Coalition's indiscriminate airstrikes.6 Out of about 2.9 million people who require acute malnutrition treatment, 1.8 million are children and 1.1 million are pregnant, lactating women.7 Children are dying at a rate of one every ten minutes.8 This amounts to over 63,000 child deaths in 2016 alone due to preventable causes according to UNICEF.9 According to Save the Children, another 50,000 child deaths are estimated in 2017.10 This is due in large part to the blockade on food, medicine and fuel supplies.

3. **Right to Food**: While airstrikes targeted 300 factories, 593 markets, 692 food storage facilities, 548 food trucks, 245 poultry/cattle farms and 2,256 agricultural fields11 (many littered with cluster munitions), the blockade prevents food from entering Yemen's ports leading to a situation where "17.8 million people in Yemen are food insecure. Out of this, approximately 8.4 million people are severely food insecure and at risk of starvation - an increase of 24 percent. The conflict has destroyed people's livelihoods and reduced their purchasing power, making it difficult for many Yemenis to meet minimal food needs."12

4. **Right to Health**: 301 healthcare facilities have been targeted by Coalition airstrikes.13 The blockade prevents food, medicine and fuel from entering Yemen's ports.14 Together, they have resulted in the lack of proper functioning of 50 percent of the facilities, leaving 16.4 million people without access to healthcare.15

5. **Right to Education**: Coalition airstrikes have targeted 827 schools16 while the lack of salary payments to public sector employees - ever since the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) was placed under the control of the Coalition-backed Hadi government - has affected two-thirds of teachers and an estimated 4.5 million children who have not been able to resume their education with the start of the school year in October 2017.17

6. **Economic Rights**: In addition to the mass suffering caused by these measures, Yemen's economy has been devastated. According to the Damage and Needs Assessment of the International Labor Organization, Yemen's

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5 Yemen airport closure killed more people than airstrikes, Norwegian Refugee Council, 9 August 2017, https://www.nrc.no/news/2017/august/yemen-airport-closure-killed-more-people-than-airstrikes/

6 https://twitter.com/LCRDye/status/943092163365277697

7 Key Messages on Cholera, United Nations, 23 July 2017 https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Yemen/Yemen%20Key%20Messages%20on%20cholera_23July2017.pdf

8 https://twitter.com/OCHAYemen/status/810476064099233793?lang=en

9 https://twitter.com/UNICEFmedia/status/829676324889489409

10 YEMEN: Hunger & disease could kill at least 50,000 children this year, more if the aid blockade continues, 15 November 2017, https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/yemen--hunger---disease-could-kill-at-least-50-000-children-this

11 https://twitter.com/LCRDye/status/943092163365277697

12 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2018-humanitarian-needs-overview-enar

13 https://twitter.com/LCRDye/status/943092163365277697

14 See complaints on health rights violations submitted to U.N. Special Procedures at http://arwarights.org/health-violations

15 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2018-humanitarian-needs-overview-enar

16 https://twitter.com/LCRDye/status/943092163365277697; see also http://arwarights.org/education-violations

17 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2018-humanitarian-needs-overview-enar

Gross Domestic Product has declined precipitously, as has the level of employment in governorates that suffer daily bombardment.18 Because of the significant damage to Yemen's education, health, agriculture and services sectors, the damage to the country will take years to repair. Compounding the dire economic situation, the Coalition-backed Hadi government's decision to move the CBY to Aden has resulted in the non-payment of monthly salaries to about 1.5 million public sector employees since September 2016. Despite the Hadi government's assurances to the international community that it would undertake all obligations of the CBY, it has not done so for over fifteen months, leaving over a million employees without pay. Because each public sector employee has an average of five dependents, the non-payment of salaries for 15 months has directly impoverished about 7.5 million people. This has negatively impacted economic activity further, impoverishing merchants, their employees, and their families.19

7. **Cultural Rights**: Coalition airstrikes have targeted several sites designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, including the Old City in Sanaa. The airstrikes have totally destroyed or partially damaged over 27 heritage sites in Yemen,20 and there are increasing reports regarding violations of cultural rights in Coalition-occupied Socotra.

Recommendations

The Coalition's unilateral coercive measures – the airstrikes on hospitals and schools, blockade of ports, restrictions on medicine and food, destruction of civic and government institutions and infrastructure – has devastated Yemen. As long as these measures remain in place and the Coalition's attacks continue, Yemenis will not be able to safely and sustainably pursue self-determination. At the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council, IDO together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, and Arabian Rights Watch Association, urge U.N. Member States to work towards ending the war and facilitating Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue while supporting the group of eminent experts in order to ensure accountability for human rights violations, abuses and crimes committed in Yemen.

18 Yemen Damage and Needs Assessment, Crisis Impact on Employment and Labour Market, International Labour Organization, January 2016, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_501929.pdf

19 For more information on the effects of the CBY move to Aden please see http://arwarights.org/right-to-food-violations

20 http://arwarights.org/heritage